

disallowed, and partially allowed. Preferably, the manager reviews all billing exception responses before they are released to the railcar owner, as described below.

5 In step **910** of the method illustrated in **FIG. 9**, the repair agent submits the exception response by clicking either the "SUBMIT" button **1208** or the "SUBMIT/NEXT" button **1210** on the billing exception response screen display **1200**. The "SUBMIT/NEXT" button **1210** also causes the graphical user interface to display a billing exception response screen for the next billing exception to be reviewed. After the repair agent clicks on either of these two buttons, the billing verification system **100, 200** generates a billing exception response record in the database **108** (step **912** of the method illustrated in **FIG. 9**). It will be understood in the art that the billing exception response record may be an independent database record or it may be contained within the corresponding billing exception record.

10 The next step **914** is to determine whether the repair agent has reviewed all billing exception records. If not, the method returns to step **904**, in which the repair agent reviews the next billing exception record in the same manner as described above. Once the repair agent has reviewed all of the billing exception records for a particular railcar owner and time period, the repair agent completes the exception review process in step **916** by clicking the "COMPLETED" button on the exception header review screen display **1100** of **FIG. 11**. The railcar owner is then notified of the billing exception responses in step **918**. At this time, the billing exception response records become available for review by the railcar owner. The railcar owner accesses the billing exception response records via the "RAILROAD COMPLETED" hypertext link **504** on the railcar owner menu screen display **500** shown in **FIG. 5**.

20 Preferably, before the railcar owner is notified that the billing exception response records are available for review, the repair agent designates a control number, or credit billing authority number, to be associated with the bill and its corresponding billing exceptions. For instance, the repair agent may designate a control number in the control number field **1104** of the billing

exception header screen **1100** shown in **FIG. 11**. The repair agent may update the control number by clicking the "UPDATE CBA" button **1110**. The railcar owner then uses this control number to take a credit on its repair charge account with the repair agent or to counter-bill the repair agent in accordance with the credit billing authority procedures provided by the AAR Interchange Rules. For example, the billing verification system **100, 200** may generate a message that is sent to the railcar owner's accounts payable system **114** indicating that the appropriate credit may be deducted from the next bill paid to that repair agent.

If necessary, the methods described above may include a number of review iterations by both the customer (i.e. railcar owner) and the vendor (i.e. repair agent). For instance, if a vendor disapproves a customer's billing exception, the customer may reply with further documentation supporting the exception. The vendor may then provide an additional response. This iterative process may continue until all disputed charges are resolved.

The invention has been described in detail with particular reference to preferred embodiments thereof and illustrative examples, but it will be understood that variations and modifications can be effected within the spirit and scope of the invention.